CLASSIFICATION SECRET SECRET

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION FROM
FOREIGN DOCUMENTS OR RADIO BROADCASTS

REPORT

CD NO.

50X1-HUM

COUNTRY	China; Northeast; USSR
SUBJECT	Scientific - Medicine, epidemiology
HOW PUBLISHED	Weekly periodical; book
WHERE PUBLISHED	Moscow
DATE PUBLISHED	9 Apr 1950; 1947
LANGUAGE	Russian

DATE OF INFORMATION 1950

DATE DIST. 3 Oct 1950

NO. OF PAGES 2

SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT NO.

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

SOURCE Ogonek, Vol XXVIII, No 15 (1192), 1950; Entsiklopedicheskiy Slovar' Voennoy Meditsiny, Vol II, State Medical Press, 1947.

A PERMANENT SOURCE OF PLAGUE INFECTION IN MANCHURIA

The news and literary weekly Ogonek presented a fictionized account (as far as the treatment of the subject is concerned' the facts presented in the article seem to be accurate) by A. Sharov of the plague epidemic which broke out in Manchuria in 1910. According to Ogonek, Academician D. K. Zabolotnyy (1866 - 1929), the epidemiologist who was entrusted with combating the epidemic and went for that purpose to Harbin, discovered that the epidemic in question originated from a natural source of infection which is constantly present in that region, owing to the occurrence of the Siberian marmot (tarbagan, i.e., Marmota sibirica Radde). Zabolotnyy and the physicians working under his direction during the epidemic isolated plague bacilli from this rodent for the first time. Previously, it was not known that plague bacilli occurred in any animal except the rat. As a result of Zabolotnyy's work, Ogonek continues, a network of steppe laboratories has been organized to watch for epizootic outbreaks among wild rodents. In consequence of this procedure and of other measures taken by Soviet science, human plague has been eradicated in the USSR, according to Ogonek.

The Encyclopedia of Military Medicine gives certain information on the Siberian marmot; a large rodent (length of body about 50 centimeters) that inhabits the steppes of the Transbaykal region, Mongolia, and Manchuria:

Colonies of thousands of these animals occasionally extend in uninterrupted chains, thus creating favorable conditions for epizootic outbreaks of plague by contagion. The spread of plague infection among Siberian marmots, as well as other rodents which hibernate, bears a strictly seasonal characteristic. The awakening from hibernation in the spring coincides with the beginning of infection. The infection is strongest during the summer months, when susceptible young animals are born. Epizootic outbreaks stop at approximately the time when the period of hibernation begins. Contagion is transmitted from marmot to marmot by fleas. Although occasionally humans may be infected in the same manner, the principal mode of infection is through contact with animals which have been trapped and are being skinned or handled in the process of melting out their grease. The Siberian marmot is the chief vector of plague in and around the Transbaykal-Mongolian infection focus.

CLASSIFICATION SECRET SECRET

STATE	X	NAVY	X	NSRB	DISTRIBUTION
ARMY	X	AIR	X	FBI	

The spread of infection from marmots caused the well-known epidemic along the Chinese Eastern Railroad in 1911 - 1912. In the course of that epidemic, 60,000 men perished.

The encyclopedia states that the Tyan'shan marmot (Marmota baibacina Pall.), which inhabits the mountains of Eastern Kazakhstan and Kirgiziya, forms a reservoir of plague in the highlands of that region. Its mode of life is very similar to that of the Siberian marmot and it spreads infection to humans in the same manner.

Another carrier of plague described in the encyclopedia is an animal resembling the gopher (suslik malyy, Citellus pigmaeus Pall.), which inhabits the steppe belt of the USSR from the southern Ukraine (on the Dnepr) to Mongolia. This animal has been responsible for several human plague outbreaks which have occurred in the Caspian Sea region since 1912. Occasionally the infection may be transmitted by fleas from this rodent to an intermediate host (a rodent of the mouse family which has propagated to an exceptional extent at a particular time), and from the intermediate host by fleas to humans. The Daur suslik (Citellus dauricus Br.) is involved in epizootic outbreaks of plague in the Transbaykal, Mongolia, and Manchuria regions, while the yellow suslik (Citellus fulvus Licht.), of the Volga area, Kazakhstan, and Central Asia, although an epizootic carrier, does not play an important role in causing human infection.

- E N D -